

**Citizens Liaison Committee to Community Center**  
**Minutes – February 23, 2006 – Auditorium, Takoma Park Community Center**

Meeting convened at 7:30 p.m.

Members present:

Howard Kohn, Wayne Sherwood, Juanita Kus-Lorentz, Stephen Brown, Dallas Burtraw, Andy Keleman, Ray Scannell, Tom Gagliardo, Peter Kovar, Erik Lichtenberg, Alice Sims, Cindy Dyballa, Maurice Belanger, Richard Levine

Staff: Debra Haiduven

Guests: Kathy Porter, Bruce Williams, Dave Lorentz

The following motion was made by Andy Keleman and seconded by Wayne Sherwood, and was approved unanimously:

We recommend that the City hire a professional firm to assess the logistical variables and produce cost estimates for (approx.) three gym options, high-end, low-end, and middle. We are available to work with the professional cost estimator, and we have identified a number of guidelines for the process. The gym should be the maximum size within the engineering limitations and constraints of geography. There should be no serious risk of damage to the large silver maple at the cul-de-sac, no intrusion onto school property that reduces parking or interferes with the loading dock, and no intrusion that impedes current accessibility to residential properties at the end of Grant Ave. We recommend bleachers with seating for approximately 100-150 spectators (comparable to those at Piney Branch Elementary), two bathrooms, and approximately 25 lockers. Showers are not necessary.

The Committee spent the rest of the meeting discussing and adopting the following summary of previous discussions pertinent to the gym:

**PURPOSE**

The gym is to serve as recreational venue for youth-and-adult sports – basketball, volleyball, indoor soccer, perhaps floor hockey, martial arts, aerobics and other activities. (See attached document for data compiled thus far about potential users.)

The Committee also has explored dedicating some gym time for raising revenues to offset both capital and operational costs. (See attached revenue analysis by Erik Lichtenberg.)

As a general principle, the gym should attract a limited number of spectators, seldom more than 40-50 for two side-by-side games. Activities that draw an audience would take place almost exclusively on weekends.

During mornings and early afternoons the gym would be used primarily by seniors or for tot programs. In late afternoons, the primary use would be for after-school programs, and evenings would be for classes, team practices or open recreation, adult or youth.

On occasion the gym may be used for dances, fairs, assemblies or other large events, but this is not a primary purpose.

### AMENITIES

Recommended are bleachers with seating for approximately 100-150 (comparable to those at Piney Branch Elementary), two bathrooms, and approximately 25 lockers for storing gym bags.

Showers are not necessary.

### SIZE

There are five familiar sizes, ranging from smallest to largest: 1) Takoma Park Elementary; 2) Piney Branch Elementary; 3) Takoma Park Middle; 4) Blair High School; 5) University of Maryland.

The City gym should be at least a Size 2, but it is not necessary that it be a Size 5. Agreed-upon restrictions on the size:

- No serious risk of damage to the large silver maple at the cul-de-sac;
- No intrusion onto school property that reduces parking or interferes with the loading dock;
- No intrusion that impedes current accessibility to residential properties at the end of Grant Ave.

### PARKING

It is not known how many parking spaces will be necessary to prevent unwelcome encroachment on the neighborhood. The County does not specify a required number of spaces, leaving that determination to the City. (Note: The only large event held thus far at the community center – the ribbon-cutting ceremony that drew an estimated 300 people – did not trigger any complaints from neighboring residents.)

Once the Phase Two renovation is completed we recommend the City undertake a survey of parking needs, based on actual use.

As a fundamental policy, however, we believe the City should expand parking at or near the site to the extent possible.

Previously we informed Council of our recommendations in favor of angled parking along Maple Ave. and of moving City-owned vehicles off-site after the close of the business day.

For large events at the community center we have recommended the use of the Darwin Avenue parking lot, the Piney Branch Elementary and Takoma Park Elementary parking lots and the Franklin Apartments parking lot. We are also on record in favor of a coordinated calendar between the City and the two elementary schools to avoid scheduling two large events on the same date.

Still pending further investigation are these options:

- A parking lot under the full expanse of the gym, approximately 20 spaces, though this appears to be the most expensive per space;

- A parking lot under part of the gym & alongside the gym, an estimated 12-15 spaces, probably less expensive but contingent on the design of the gym;
- Deck parking at the rear of the community center, an estimated 60-70 spaces and presumably less expensive per space than underground parking, though the logistics of entering and exiting must be worked out;
- The Pepco lot across Maple Ave., potentially 25-35 spaces that would be created by setting metal grids into the grass, though it is not known if Pepco is agreeable to any arrangement;

Another possible location for parking -- on the asphalt alongside Wilhelm Field -- is no longer an option because of objections from the Parks Commission, the property owner.

### SITE SURVEY

The City has commissioned two tests to help assess engineering considerations that are likely to affect costs

- Sonar scoping to locate the underground utility lines has been finished, and results are due shortly.
- Several borings will be conducted to determine stability of soil. Testing will take place sometime in next few weeks.

### PENDING QUESTIONS

- Cinder block vs. Steel Frame. What is the cost differential? If steel-frame construction is cheaper, are there any long-term disadvantages? For instance, is it more difficult to heat a steel-frame gym?
- Gym Foundation. If the soil is stable enough to support a cement slab and avoid excavation, what are the savings? Is a partial excavation possible and cost-efficient? If the soil is unstable, what is the cost of excavation compared to the cost of sinking a perimeter of steel/cement posts into the ground?
- Utility Lines. What would be the dimensions of a gym that fits inside the grid of underground utility lines? What would be the cost of relocating the lines? As an alternative, what would be the cost of demolishing part of the existing building (the conference room behind the stage) to increase the size of the gym? Would Pepco allow a gym to be built over the top of utility lines if it is raised on steel girders above the ground? What is the extra cost if bleachers are designed as a jut-out, i.e. a non-rectangular building?
- Green Features. Can the shape of the roof be adjusted to accommodate solar panels? What other green features could be incorporated, and at what cost?
- Parking. What is the cost per space of a parking lot under the gym compared to the cost per space of a one-tier parking lot behind the community center? How many spaces are possible with either option?
- Connections to existing building. Is it most cost-efficient to tie the gym to the HVAC system of the community center? What are the anticipated costs of connecting to the system, and what are the potential problems?

- Flooring. What are the costs and advantages of different flooring options?